

Remarks

This Amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination ("RCE"). Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claims 12, 16, and 19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claim 21 has been added to even more particularly define the instant method. Certain claims that previously depended from claim 12 have been amended to depend from new claim 21. Claims 2-11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 are now pending in the application. Claims 20 and 21 are independent. The sole rejection is respectfully submitted to be obviated in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

New claim 21 defines an embodiment of the method that includes, *inter alia*, a feature of the invention previously presented in now-canceled claim 16. That is, instant claim 21 includes the step of "disposing a resin film on a veneer sheet having pores." In addition, claim 21 requires that "the step of heating [be] effected under an applied pressure such that the evaporated water exhausted from the pores *flows out through edges of the member*" (emphasis added). See the disclosure at specification page 2 that "pressure equalization is effected by vapor flowing out via the edges of the composite." Claim 20,

directed to a fire-retardant flat structural member, has been amended for consistency with claim 21.

Entry of each of the amendments is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Kelso

Claims 2-12 and 14-20 again stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over GB 1 604 803 to Kelso, Jr. (hereinafter "Kelso").

The rejection of claims 2-12 and 14-20 under § 103(a) based on Kelso is respectfully deemed to be obviated. For at least the reasons presented in Applicants' Response filed August 13, 2009, and for the following reasons, the disclosure of Kelso would not have rendered obvious Applicants' presently claimed invention.

First, the disclosure of Kelso does not teach each feature of Applicants' presently claimed invention. As indicated above, claim 21 has been added to even more particularly define the instant method. Kelso teaches a method for wood preservation. For this purpose the wood to be preserved is placed in a pressure treatment vessel at an initial elevated pressure. Subsequently, an aqueous treatment liquid is introduced into the vessel at the elevated pressure so that the wood is fully immersed in the liquid. Then, the pressure is increased within the vessel to above the initial pressure so as to impregnate the wood with the treatment liquid. The increased pressure is maintained within the vessel so

as to retain the treatment liquid in the wood at a temperature of at least 65°C for a specified period.

That is most certainly not Applicants' presently claimed invention. Claim 21 requires a first step of "disposing a resin film on a veneer sheet having pores." In contrast, Kelso uses a liquid which is introduced into the vessel in which the wood is placed. In addition, claim 21 requires supplying heat to the veneer sheet to evaporate the water bound in the pores of the veneer and to remove the evaporated water from the pores. The aforementioned step enables the resin film, which is liquefied by the heat, to flow into the pores of the veneer. These features of Applicants' invention that are required by claim 21 are not disclosed by Kelso. Therefore, Kelso simply does not meet each feature of Applicants' presently claimed invention.

Second, because of the above-described differences, there is simply no teaching in Kelso that would have led one to modify the reference in a way that would result in the embodiment of the invention defined by Applicants' claim 21. For example, Kelso discloses that the wood is surrounded by the treatment liquid and that a pressure is supplied to force the treatment liquid into the pores of the wood. Even though Kelso discloses the use of heat, the heat is used to accelerate the reaction between the treatment liquid and the wood. That is quite different from Applicants' claimed method, which requires a step of heating to (i) evaporate and exhaust the water bound in the pores of the veneer sheet and

(ii) liquefy the resin film. As a result, the exhausting evaporated water draws the liquefied resin film into the pores of the veneer sheet.

With respect to the applied pressure, in the present invention the pressure causes the evaporated water exhausted from the pores to flow out via the edges of the member. In contrast, Kelso used the pressure to force the treatment liquid into the wood.

Therefore, contrary to the assertions in the Office Action (page 2), a person having ordinary skill in the art who knows the teaching of Kelso would not arrive at the presently claimed invention simply by "optimiz[ing] conditions of the process." A skilled person would instead have to recognize that it would be advantageous to dispose a resin film on a veneer sheet and supply heat to the veneer sheet to remove the water from the pores of the veneer sheet and cause the resin to flow into the pores of the veneer sheet.

Accordingly, the disclosure of Kelso would not have rendered obvious the invention defined by Applicants' claim 21. Now pending claims 2-11, 14, 15, 17, and 18 are allowable because they depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 21, and for the subject matter recited therein. Product claim 20 is similarly allowable.

In view of the foregoing, this application is now in condition for allowance. If the examiner believes that an

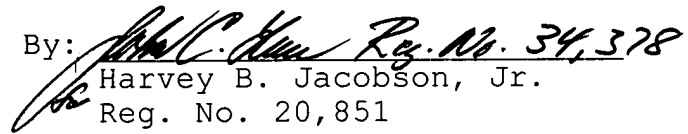
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interview might expedite prosecution, the examiner is invited to
contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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